
PREFACE

The 1994 National Vaccine Plan illustrates clearly the U.S. Government's commitment to rational reform of the health care system. For the first time in the Nation's history, the plan provides a framework in which diverse domestic and international, public- and private-sector activities in immunization and vaccine development can be effectively coordinated to achieve their ultimate public health goal -- the safe and effective prevention of infectious diseases.

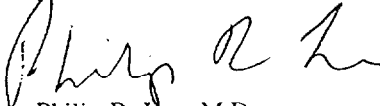
This document responds to the mandate of Congress contained in P.L. 99-660, in which the vision of a National Vaccine Program (NVP) was first outlined. This first plan -- the 1994 plan -- is an initial step in forging a truly integrated national effort to give all Americans the fullest possible protection.

As reflected in the plan, statutory responsibility for public health in the United States rests with States; in the promotion and delivery of immunization, States and municipalities have played a pivotal role, which this plan envisages continuing. Some Federal agencies have also traditionally played an important part in combating infectious diseases, through research on vaccines or support of vaccination efforts, and the plan outlines priorities for Federal activities. The plan also acknowledges the critical role played by the private sector in vaccine development and immunization. Vaccine companies develop, request licensure for, and supply vaccines under those circumstances in which they believe a commercially viable product is feasible. Private-sector health care providers deliver a large proportion of vaccinations. These private-sector contributions are essential parts of the collective national effort. Through further discussions with the private sector, we hope to identify optimal approaches to public/private collaboration on the development of vaccines, particularly for diseases where commercial viability may be uncertain, and on the effective delivery of vaccinations. Future plans will reflect these deliberations. In addition, they will relate Federal agency activities more specifically to overall NVP goals and objectives.

This plan describes the way in which the United States should promote immunization to protect the health of all people. Promoting immunization will ensure that we achieve the full benefits of those vaccines already licensed. Accelerating the development and use of promising new and improved vaccine candidates will mean that their benefits will reach the American public that much sooner.

The challenge to the Federal Government is to implement the National Vaccine Program -- effectively and efficiently -- to achieve the goals outlined in this plan. The President's proposal for a Childhood Immunization Initiative and congressional commitment of the necessary resources already represent significant steps made toward meeting the Nation's health goals.

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